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World Art Forum for Development Foundation

# World Art Forum for Development Foundation

## World Art Forum II COP 27

Sharm El-Sheikh

6<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> of November

## Report



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## Introduction

On 6 November 2022, the World Art Forum (WAF) launched its 2<sup>nd</sup> edition on the sidelines of COP 27 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt. It marked the first event under the auspices of the newly established World Art Forum for Development Foundation (WAFDF). The announcement of 2022 as the Year of Civil Society by H.E President Abdelfattah El-Sissi created the right circumstances to ensure the sustainability of WAF by institutionalizing it in the form of the Foundation. As an established Egyptian NGO, the Foundation joined the Ministry of Environment, the United Nations, and Resilience Hub to bring art into the conversation on climate action.

Artists from over 60 countries joined WAF from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> of November for the duration of COP 27 to show how art can actively contribute to SDG 13: Climate Action. WAF established the connection between art and climate action through several modes including sustainable artworks, discussions, live performances, and workshops. Artists sat at the discussion table with development experts, government officials, and international organizations representatives shedding light on the contribution of art to climate action as a creative economy, a microphone for advocacy and awareness raising, means for communication across cultural and language barriers, and an untapped well of creative and innovative ideas.

The sustainable art exhibition in the Green Zone was one concrete application of art in climate action: recycled art showed how artists can recycle all types of waste into magnificent art pieces, digital art showed how art can decrease its carbon footprint and become accessible to everyone, and art by children and youth displayed their ingenuity and creativity while giving them a voice to participate and impact the Summit's attendees. Environmentally themed artwork was strategically placed in pavilions in the Blue Zone to commemorate art's presence in the high-level discussions. The Egyptian Pavilion, the UN Pavilion, and the Resilience Hub Pavilion hosted various artwork featuring Egyptian and environmental themes. Pictures of the artwork and exhibition are listed in the annex. The workshops personalized climate action by having guests partake in different activities that all revolve around climate change, raising awareness, and cooperating for climate action. This report will briefly outline the activities of WAF II at COP 27, our findings, and the way forward for the Foundation.

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## WAF II Agenda

Our guests participated in several interactive events including an opening session, one panel discussion, live art performance, and multiple workshops:

### Opening Session

#### Welcome Note

- **Ms. Randa Fouad**, President of World Art Forum for Development Foundation

#### Keynote Speakers

- **Eng. Yosra Abdelaziz**, Member of the Technical Support Office in the Ministry of Environment representing the Minister of Environment
- **H.E Dr. Mahmoud Mohieldin**, UN Climate Change High-Level Champion for Egypt
- **H.E Dr. Ghada Waly**, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna and Executive Director of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
- **H.E Dr. Hala El Said**, Minister of Planning and Economic Development

#### Moderator

- **Artist Shereen Badr**, CEO of Sheranda World Art

### Sustainable Art Day – Panel

#### Welcome Note

- **Ms. Randa Fouad**, President of World Art Forum for Development Foundation

#### Keynote Speakers

- **Ms. Elena Panova**, UN Country Coordinator in Egypt
- **Ms. Soad ElSayed**, Youth Analyst at UNFPA Egypt representing Head of UNFPA Egypt
- **Dr. Naeema Al-Gasseer**, WHO Country Representative in Egypt
- **Mr. Omar Attaby**, CEO of Attaby Consultancy
- **Ms. Noura Farag**, Policy and Governance Assistant at IOM Egypt representing Chief of Mission of IOM Egypt
- **Ms. Deena Bahgat**, Picasso East Gallery Marketing and Relationships Manager
- **Ms. Amira Kandil**, Member of the Egyptian Parliament

#### Moderator

- **Artist Shereen Badr**, CEO of Sheranda World Art

### Performances

- Live VR art performance by **Artist Ahmed Abdelfattah**

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## **Workshops**

1. COP 27 Egypt's Tree of Unity
2. Children art workshop
3. Portrait workshop
4. Animation Workshop

# WAF II Activities at COP 27

## 1. Opening Session



WAF II opening session was held on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November in the pavilion of our partner Resilience Hub in the Blue Zone and was made up of five panelists from the arts, government, international organizations, and development and climate experts. The session kickstarted the activities of WAF II with strong notes from all attendees. Keynote speakers highlighted the direct and indirect role of art in climate action.

According to Gallup survey on the global perceptions on climate change, half of the world's population underestimate the threat of climate change or are unaware completely of the crisis. Art is capable to raising climate awareness and triggering cultural change because it is the "ultimate communicator". Dr. Mahmoud Mohieldin quoted John Ruskin's words on the 3 manuscripts of great nations with the book the of art being the only one to trust. This trust is what makes art an indispensable tool for communication and a universal language. Through it, individuals and communities can share their experiences, good practices, sand knowledge overcoming language and cultural barriers. As the UN Climate Change High-Level Champion for Egypt, Dr. Mohieldin pledged to continue his efforts to integrate art further into climate action and ensure its continuous representations in all future summits.

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Such commitments are critical to the current moment to salvage the SDGs. Dr. Ghada Waly said in her speech that the “SDGs are at risk” and art is the key to accelerate the progress toward the SDGs, innovate, and invite collaboration; all of which are essential to achieve any of the 17 goals. Art contributes directly to climate action by being a strong advocate for sustainability and as an economic industry. As an industry, it creates sustainable jobs, home-based vocations, and micro-enterprises that can lift people out of poverty and protect youth from falling victims to the traps of crime, drugs, and terrorism. A community plagued by crime, drugs, and radicalization is paralyzed in the face of the threats of climate change. Growing up appreciating, practicing, and understanding art makes it difficult to be radicalized because art speaks to the mind, heart, and soul. It also helps ground people and connect them to their roots by preserving cultural heritage.

Recognizing the importance of art, the Egyptian government has been working on positioning Egypt as a global art hub. Dr. Hala El-Said mentioned the government’s strategic goals in repositioning itself in the global art market by encouraging and facilitating art exhibitions and fairs. WAF II art exhibition in the Green Zone, the fruit of close collaboration with Ministry of Environment, is a prime example of the government’s renewed commitment to promoting art. The climate summit also hosted other artistic exhibitions and events including recycled art installations in the COY and COP 27 Blue Zone and recycled fashion exhibition in the COP 27 Green Zone. The government has also commissioned new museums and is building an Arts and Culture City in the New Capital. Art also plays a major role in creating a positive psychological atmosphere across the country by cultivating a deep affection for the environment while allowing its viewers to unwind and deal with climate anxiety.

## **2. Sustainable Art Day Session**

The Sustainable Art Day Session on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November in the Green Zone marks the second panel in WAF II in collaboration with UN Egypt and the Ministry of Environment. The panel consisted of eight diverse speakers representing art, international organizations, legislation, and the private sector.

Ms. Elena Panova kickstarted the session stressing the importance of art as means for climate action. COP 27 was designated as an “implementation COP” and art has a role to play. The UN



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conducted a perception survey of the Egyptian public about climate change; only a third of the population understands climate change, its consequences, and its man-made nature. Art is critical in changing the behavioral patterns necessary to advance climate action. Art raises awareness about climate change by conveying the messages through an understandable medium that mobilizes its viewers into taking actions that contribute to climate action. The sentiment was mirrored by other speakers who discussed their use of art as an engagement and empowerment tool with women and youth. For example, Ms. Noura Farag discussed IOM's initiatives to empower migrant and refugee women through workshops and capacity building in arts and crafts to use recycled materials to create various sellable products.

Art can also be part of a virtuous cycle to improve other areas of life that in turn nurtures a positive, ecofriendly mindset. Dr. Naeema Al-Gasseer highlighted art's ability to provide mental therapy to trauma patients by providing an outlet for victims to process their emotions and share their experiences. It can also be used to raise awareness about harmful practices such as FGM and the damages they cause to the individual and to society. In parallel, art's contribution to



greener societies would result in cleaner environments which in turn lead to better health.

To attain the positive results of art it must be accessible to all. Art can come in the form of graffiti on buildings, architectural masterpieces, public exhibitions and fairs, museums, and digital form. There is a massive opportunity to create sustainable cities that are capable of uplifting the life and spirits of their dwellers through incorporating sustainable art in the design of urban

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sustainability projects. Art can even be used to push legislation by building public support and changing mindsets of legislators. Ms. Amira Kandil presented one example of her efforts to push a bill on food waste in parliament. After months of fruitless negotiations, she was inspired by a FAO video on food waste that made the idea more approachable and gave her creative ideas to make leeway in pushing the bill.

### 3. WAF II Art Exhibition



The WAF II Art Exhibition in the Green Zone ran for the duration of COP 27. The exhibition hosted diverse works of artists from over 60 countries. It set itself apart from other national, regional, and international art fairs by adopting SDG 13 at the heart of its display and actively showed guests the

connection between art and climate action. The exhibition also provided a venue for the artist to take part in the events of COP 27 and make a direct impact. Artwork made from recycled material and waste such as electronic and household waste, paper, cloth, scrape metal, nails, and industrial waste featured largely in the display. These pieces spoke of the artist's ability and ingenuity of taking items that people would throw away and unrecyclable waste and turning them into artwork that amaze the viewer and into a monetary investment. Some of the most popular pieces at the exhibition were statues made by Egyptians students in the Faculty of Fine Arts in Helwan University that were made from egg cartons, discarded toys, and miscellaneous household waste such as buttons and zippers.





Works by youth and children were sought in high demand during the exhibition. Guests were in awe of the works created by participating children and youth from the ages of 8 to 16 years old. The children were asked to draw their perspective of the environment, their wishes for the future, and messages to communicate to attendees of the summit. The attention to

details and profound messages in their work touched the heart of all who attended and was an immediate attention grabber. A group of artists from Germany presented a unique idea of

floating islands that solution to communities impacts of rising sea life demonstration in floating pyramid with the using solar panels. The made from plastic water paperclips containing



could provide a short-term suffering from the immediate levels. The artists created a Sharm El-Sheikh with a COP 27 logo that was lighted pyramid was built over a base bottles that were filled with participants wishes for the

summit and the environment; hence, COP 27 floated on the wishes of the people.

The profound messaging echoed in the digital art displayed in the exhibition from NFTs, rap songs, photography, to video art from around the world. Digital art speaks the modern language of technology while making art accessible to all; one needs to access a website only to fully enjoy these works instead of having to physical visit an exhibition. The featured photography showed real-life images from droughts, pollution, and wastelands while the video art included short clips that spoke of world's apathy toward environmental degradation and climate change.



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Several dignitaries visited the exhibition including the Minister of Environment, Dr. Yasmine Fouad, Minister of Culture, Dr. Nevin Al-Kilany, Minister of Immigration, Ambassador Suha El-Gendy, and Minister of Planning and Economic Development, Dr. Hala ElSaid. Dr. Ghada Waly, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, and Ms. Elena Panova, UN Country Coordinator Egypt were among the guests of the exhibition. Dr Maya Morsy, President of Egypt's National Council for Women, and other senior officials from international and governmental organizations, the private sector, and NGOs also visited the exhibition.

#### **4. WAF II Art Workshops and Performances**



Throughout the two weeks of WAF II guests participated in several workshops and performances. It was kickstarted in the opening session with a live VR art performance showing art's ability to capture the attention of the modern audience by utilizing state-of-the-art technology. Such performances would be particularly useful in initiatives focusing on youth and utilizing new technologies such as the Metaverse. It was followed by the launch of the COP 27 Egypt's Tree of Unity: a piece of collective art where guests can paint parts of a tree and add their own touches. The activity ran for the duration of COP 27 and was an open invitation for everyone to join in bringing the tree to life. The artwork symbolizes COP 27

attendees' unity in fighting climate change.



The Forum ran several workshops in the Blue and Green Zones; three of which focused on children and youth. The workshops aimed to engage attendees who normally might not have had the time with art. They raised awareness about key environmental issues such as pollution and environmental degradation. The youth and children workshops taught the participants simple skills they can use at their leisure to create short animation movies using simple, recycled materials at home or school such as paper, straws, and strings. There were also a few entertaining activities such as portrait drawing that broke the monotonous and serious atmosphere of the summit for a few moments. Such breaks are important to maintain a positive attitude and reenergize the spirit before delving back into serious discussions and negotiations.



## The Way Forward for WAFDF

WAF II built on and expanded the partnerships developed during the first forum. The institutionalization of the Forum in the Foundation allows it to take on a bigger and more holistic approach to the SDGs by working on initiatives and projects with different stakeholders.

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One of the main outcomes of the Forum was establishing the readiness of the development sector to use art for climate action and sustainable development, especially in projects and initiatives revolving around engaging and empowering women and youth.

The popularity of the artworks of children and youth in the exhibition and workshops makes them the natural future focal point for the work of the Foundation. Art can be used to turn the SDGs into artworks that are more engaging to youth, educate and mobilize through scaling up art education and activities in schools and universities, and to foster social cohesion and combat radicalism from a young age. Digital art forms like NFTs, photography, video art, and virtual exhibitions and performances speaks the language of the modern youth and makes art more relevant and relatable.

Another focus for the Foundation in the coming phase will be on women. Art is a creative industry as Dr. Waly and Dr. Al-Said mentioned and thus capable of empowering women by creating opportunities for them to use simple materials to create sellable artwork, turn crafts into micro-industries, and create simple, home-based vocations that are suitable for their circumstances. Women are among the groups most impacted by the adverse effects of climate change and it will be critical to raise their awareness, engage them in climate action, and empower them to change their behavioral patterns through using art.

The Foundation will focus its work for 2023 and afterward on expanding the idea of Sustainable Art across Egypt, MENA, and Africa, empowering women and youth through workshops, symposiums, and capacity building projects for arts and handcrafts using recycled materials and sustainable methods, and launching initiatives that support climate action building on Egypt's leadership of COP for the next year.

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## Annex

### 1. Blue Zone Display



*Figure 1 - Egyptian Pavilion*



*Figure 2 - Egyptian Pavilion (President of World Bank, Mr. David Malpas, Egyptian Prime Minister, H.E. Dr. Mosta-fa Madbouly, Egyptian Minister of International Cooperation, H.E. Dr. Rania Al-Mashat, Egyptian Minis-ter of Environment, H.E. Dr. Yasmine Fouad)*





Figure 3 - Egyptian Pavilion



Figure 4 - Egyptian Pavilion





Figure 5 - Egyptian Pavilion



Figure 6 - Resilience Hub Pavilion (Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, Ms. Nancy Pelosi)

## 2. Green Zone Exhibition



Figure 7 - H.E. Dr. Yasmine Fouad, Egyptian Minister of Environment and Ms. Rawya Mansour, Chairperson of RAMSCO



Figure 8 - Eng. Rabab Abdelaty, CEO of Rosa International, Artist Ahmed Abdelfattah, and H.E Dr. Nevin El-Kilani, Egyptian Minister of Culture





*Figure 9 – H.E. Dr. Ghada Waly, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna and Executive Director of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*



*Figure 10 - Ms. Elena Panova, UN Country Coordinator Egypt, Eng. Rabab Abdelaty*



*Figure 11 - H.E Ambassador Suha El-Gindy, Egyptian Ministry of Immigration, Eng. Rabab Abdelaty*



*Figure 12 - H.E Dr. Hala El-Said, Egyptian Minister of Planning and Economic Development, Artist Ahmed Abdelfattah*





Figure 13 - Dr. Maya Morsy, President of the National Council of Women, H.E Dr. Ghada Waly

### 3. Opening Session



Figure 14 - H.E. Dr. Ghada Waly, H.E. Dr. Mahmoud Mohieldin, UN Climate High-Level Champion for Egypt, H.E. Dr. Hala Al-Said